

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 005566

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/09/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [OREP](#) [SNAR](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL DAVIS: TERRORISM, DRUGS, FTA IN COLOMBIA

Classified By: Charge Milton K. Drucker for reason 1.4 D.

11. (U) Summary. Representative Tom Davis (R-VA), Chairman of the House Government Reform Committee, led a Congressional delegation to Colombia June 1 to June 3. Other Government Reform Committee members included Rep. Candice Miller (R-MI), Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD), and Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY). Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA) from the House Appropriations Committee also attended. Codel Davis focused on bilateral cooperation in fighting narcotics trafficking and terrorism and obtaining an update on bilateral negotiations on the Andean Free Trade Agreement. The delegation met with Minister of Trade Botero and conducted a site visit to a coca manual eradication site supported by post's Narcotics Affairs Section. A meeting with President Uribe, Minister of Foreign Relations Barco, and Minister of Defense Uribe will be reported septel. End Summary.

Ministry of Trade -- CAFTA and Andean FTA Discussed

12. (C) On June 1, the delegation met with Minister of Trade Botero, Vice Minister Munoz, and FTA chief negotiator Gomez to discuss the current state of play of the Andean FTA. Rep. Davis opened the meeting by stating the debate in the U.S. Congress over CAFTA was delicate, with 20 or more votes needed to pass the House. Davis expressed his support for Colombian President Uribe's leadership, as well as his support for CAFTA and the Andean FTA. He then invited the other members of the delegation to express their opinions. Rep. Miller stated that while she supported free trade, no one in her district had expressed any support for CAFTA. Rep. Maloney outlined her reservations about CAFTA and concerns about labor issues. Rep. Ruppersberger said he personally could support free trade, but many in his district did not support CAFTA. He noted that his district included large companies who had suffered from foreign competition. Rep. Wolf stated his concern about the lack of strong action against China, especially regarding protection of intellectual property rights, and his intent to vote against any agreement until the administration took a hard line stance on human rights in China.

13. (C) Minister Botero expressed his concerns about the need for more flexibility from the United States regarding agriculture and his belief that the FTA would be a win-win situation for both our countries. Botero added that Colombia's concern about hurting the local agricultural sector was a national security matter, as those that left legal products would either turn to cultivation coca or the guerrilla groups. Gomez then went on to explain that Colombia was a growing, billion dollar a year agricultural market and that the U.S. only had half the market. With an FTA, the U.S. percentage could grow to 70-80 percent overall, and almost total dominance in wheat, corn, and barley. As it stood, Colombia was the United States' biggest agricultural market south of Mexico and the GOC was prepared to give the U.S. an even bigger market in exchange for concessions on market access to the U.S. for Colombian agricultural items. Rep. Davis said he would be glad to share the Minister's concerns with USTR Portman.

Visit to Manual Eradication Project

14. (U) Codel members and staff traveled to Pauna, Department of Boyaca in Colombian National Police (CNP) UH-60L Blackhawks to observe CNP manual coca eradication activities the morning of June 2. Through hands-on experience and in-field briefings by CNP Antinarcotics Director General Gomez and his eradication staff, the delegation learned that in selected areas and with adequate security, manual eradication can be a useful complement to aerial eradication. General Gomez and his staff explained that in isolated cases, i.e., where it is difficult to spray from the air because of very small field size, permanent cloud cover, or high winds, manual eradication can be cost-effective. The delegation also noted the limitations on such activities imposed by rugged terrain, rigorous working conditions, and the limited ground transport capabilities of the CNP. The CNP's Judicial Police also briefed the delegation on GOC's ongoing initiative to seize properties of landowners who grow illicit crops on their land.

15. (U) The Colombian American Chamber of Commerce hosted a dinner on June 1 for the delegation and American Chamber members. The Ambassador hosted a dinner for the delegation and key Colombian Congressional leadership on June 2. The delegation had a chance to exchange ideas with counterparts on the legislative process, the law on peace and justice, Plan Colombia, and the Free Trade Agreement.

16. (U) Codel Davis was unable to clear this cable before departure.
DRUCKER